

November 17, 1955.

Mr. Lewis C. Coffin
 Assistant Director
 Processing Department
 Library of Congress
 Washington 25, D.C.

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PROCESSING DEPARTMENT
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Dear Lewis:

After receipt of the copy of Mr. Munford's letter to Boguchev and of your cable telling me to inform Boguchev that you would wait for his reply to your proposals, I went around to the Lenin Library. The substance of what Boguchev told me I gave in my cable of November 15. I sent this by cable because I thought that under the present circumstances you might wish to have the information in a hurry. Here I would like to amplify the subjects mentioned in the cable.

The purpose of my visit to Boguchev was simply to inform him that you would wait for his answer and to inquire about the possibility of getting back numbers of Knizhnaya Letopis and Letopis Periodicheskikh Izdaniy. Boguchev, however, volunteered his initial reactions to your proposals, and I simply tried to explain your position as well as I could on the basis of information from you available to the Embassy. Boguchev made a great point of the inacceptability of Mezhkniga rates. He kept repeating that "we libraries are disinterested servants of culture and not merchants." However, the merchant in him showed itself when he added that since American books are much more expensive than Soviet books, at the Mezhkniga rate, the Lenin Library would be getting the short end of the deal. From his remarks I gathered that it was extremely unlikely that he will back down on this question. What he will propose is a volume for volume exchange or at the most a page for page system of accounting. As regards your request to be able to choose any title from Knizhnaya Letopis, provincially as well as centrally published, he said that the Lenin Library had no objection to this in principle, but that in practice it would be extremely difficult for them to supply you with provincially published titles. He said that the Lenin Library receives free only two copies of provincially published books and periodicals, which does not leave them any surplus for exchange. For them to order or buy such materials, he maintained, would be very difficult and a great amount of work. Given the general inefficiency of book distribution here, I rather think that this is true. It is almost impossible to buy provincially published titles in Moscow, and I am sure difficult even for the Lenin Library to get them in any significant quantities. Therefore he will most probably say that he can only supply you with centrally published titles, which are easier for him to obtain since he is sitting on the source of supply. Even if you can't get provincially published titles from the Lenin Library I don't think it will be a catastrophe. Most of the worthwhile material which is published outside of the center is put out by the republic Academies of Science, and these you should now be able to get

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on direct exchange with them. The output of the provincial universities is very small, and this too you should be able to get on direct exchange. In my experience, the rest of the provincial book output is both much smaller in quantity than we have thought and relatively uninteresting from the point of view of American research libraries, as you will see when the material I acquired in such places as Kazan and Rostov reaches you.

I have this information from other sources than Boguchev

As regards the counterpart for the complete set of U.S. government publications, Boguchev said it would be impossible to give you all the periodicals listed in Letopis Periodidicheskikh Izdani. As he put it, this is a veritable sea of material, most of which -- local newspapers, magazines, etc., -- the Lenin Library gets in only one copy and which would be very troublesome for them to acquire in greater quantity. From what I have seen of books and libraries here, this is almost certainly true. To give you an example, in the province of Kalinin alone some 53 newspapers and magazines are published. For the Lenin Library to acquire such material for the whole Soviet Union for you would indeed be an immense task and represent a cash value probably superior to the U.S. government publications. I replied that you did not know this because we had not seen the Letopis Periodidicheskikh Izdani and that if this publication were supplied perhaps you would be willing to settle for a certain percentage of the publications listed there and which are not available on the Mekhkniga export list. Also it might be possible to trade the U.S. government documents for Soviet government documents, such as Postanovleniia Verkhovnogo Soveta which, if I am not mistaken, we do not now receive. Boguchev did not say, concretely, what he would propose in exchange for the U.S. government documents, but he seemed rather flexible on the point.

As regards Knizhnaia Letopis in exchange for 100,000 L.C. cards, Boguchev said that since both constituted comprehensive national bibliographies they represented an equal exchange. I told him your point of view on the matter, and it seemed to make some impression. Nonetheless, he will probably try to link giving you back numbers of Knizhnaia Letopis and Letopis Periodidicheskikh Izdani (requested in Mr. Jacobson's note) with the L.C. cards which the Lenin Library did not receive in the past two years. As for the future, he will probably continue to ask for your cards in exchange for Knizhnaia Letopis, although again he seemed more flexible than on the question of costs. On the other questions raised by Mr. Munford's letter to him I have already told you what he said in the cable. Finally, he concluded by agreeing that the only acceptable exchange with you was an equal and free one, however I don't think he is going to see eye to eye with you on what either of those terms mean. Part of this is because he is out to get as much as he can for as little as he can; part of this is because it is really more difficult for the Lenin Library to provide exchange services than at times we think.

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If his conversation with me is any indication, his reply to your letter will probably contain not only counter-proposals, but arguments and explanations, and you might want to be prepared to meet his explanations with counter-explanations. Explaining your position perhaps might be helpful for there are many very elementary things he does not understand. For instance, on the high cost of American books, he said the following: Since the Library of Congress is connected with a "legislative organ," why can't it prevail on that "organ" to fix American book prices at a "reasonable" level. I tried to explain why this was impossible, but I am afraid that I didn't make much impression. Also he seems convinced that if we wanted we could simply commandeer the manufacturers' catalogs he is after.

Boguchev also showed great eagerness to get a hold of the necessary equipment to make micro-cards "in order to depend on no one for them." He will undoubtedly approach you on this matter, and I thought you might want to know about it in advance. Next week I am going back to Leningrad to see the Academy of Sciences there about various requests I made the first time I called. One matter I am to discuss concerns the cost at which exchanges with Harvard are to be calculated. Harvard wants me to ask for Mezhdunarodnye rates. I will let you know the result immediately, since it might be of use to you for your own exchanges.

This last week I called at the library of the University of Moscow. They were extremely cordial and very co-operative. The most important things I learned are the following. Moscow University also has its own microfilming equipment, unlike any other Soviet University. The University has a very large exchange fund, particularly in pre-Revolutionary and pre-World War II books, and they said that they would be very glad to help American libraries acquire materials from these periods. I left with them two lists of out-of-print material -- one from Harvard and one from California -- and they said that they would investigate their stocks to see what titles they could send. On the whole they seemed optimistic about being able to give me a rather large percentage of these titles. If this works out it would be about as good a solution to the out-of-print book problem as can be found, since trying to acquire such books through the stores is extremely difficult. In addition, Moscow University agreed to send one American university a few local newspapers, such as Evening Moscow, but felt that it could not engage in this kind of exchange on a large scale. The reason Moscow is not too interested in this sort of exchange is that, unlike other Soviet universities, it has ready access to foreign currency and can buy its own foreign periodicals. Since they would do this for only one university, I suggested that that university be Harvard. I shall return to Moscow University library again to inquire about the progress they have made on the out-of-print titles.

I received your letter of November 10 a few days ago. In answer to your question regarding the date of my return, for the

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moment I don't know. Some of the books I bought in the provinces have not yet arrived in Moscow, and I have signed letters saying that I guaranteed payment of the material when it arrived. Also, I have not yet got rid of the big backlog of books already purchased but not wrapped. As soon as I can see a wind-up to both these things I will send you the date of my return.

Sincerely,

Martin

Marcia A. Malia